# Elements of Political Science

## Prof. Andrea Locatelli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of this course is to present students with conceptual instruments developed by the discipline of Political Science. Particular emphasis will be placed on phenomena and dynamics which make the internal political arena compared to the international one. With this in mind, the course is organised into three main routes: the first one presents students with an overview of the main theoretical contributions made by Political Science; the second aims to raise students’ awareness of problems concerning the “scientific” study of politics; the third part concentrates on one phenomenon in particular.

In terms of knowledge and understanding, at the end of teaching the course, students will have acquired:

- the ability to master the specialist jargon of the discipline and its main conceptual tools;

- a more conscious and mature civic culture;

- the ability to review various sources of information and select the most reliable.

In terms of applying knowledge and understanding, at the end of the course, students will be able to:

- identify the causes of complex political phenomena;

- independently interpret contemporary political events;

- evaluate and formulate policy proposals in various areas.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is organised into two modules, the first module concentrates on the study of the main issues regarding Political Science. The topics will be dealt with and discussed as questions as follows: 1) what is politics? 2) what is science and how is it produced; 3) why isn’t there only one theory within Political Science?; 4) what is the state and how does it work?; 5) what is the difference between democracies and non-democracies?; 6) how far does the form of government affect the behaviour of political figures?; 7) why can’t we survive without bureaucracy?.

The second module has a dual objective: to deepen the analysis of a political phenomenon addressed only as an introduction in the first part of the course and to allow students to familiarise with a scientific research work - therefore different from a manual or an informative textbook. The course will offer a wide range of themes, among which the student can choose according to their interests. Just as an indication, the topics that can be explored in this module include:

* the impact of COVID-19 on political processes;
* institutional and comparative analysis of political systems;
* - the development of democratic institutions;

– the impact of digitisation on political actors;

– the effects of the economic crisis in Europe.

***READING LIST***

For attending students, the following material is included in the exam programme:

- lecture notes.

- P. Grilli-O. Lanza-B. Pisciotta-L. Germano, *Capire la politica,* UTET, third edition Novara, 2020 (with the exception of some chapters that will be communicated during lectures).

- A textbook of students’ choice from a list of textbooks that will be made available at the beginning of the lessons.

For non-attending students:

- P. Grilli-O. Lanza-B. Pisciotta-L. Germano, *Capire la politica,* UTET, third edition Novara, 2020 (all chapters).

- G. Sola, *Incontro con la scienza politica,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2006.

- A textbook of students’ choice from a list of textbooks that will be made available at the beginning of the lessons.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

There will be a written examination. This test combines multiple choice questions and three open-ended questions: one for each textbook (or lecture notes). Students will score two marks per correctly answered multiple-choice question. For open questions the maximum score is 6 marks.

This system allows students a small margin of error i.e. they can still score a total of 30 marks even with some mistakes/gaps on their paper.

This format makes it possible to evaluate both the overall preparation of students over large portions of the programme, and the level of detail in the study of particular relevance themes.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

This course is an introduction to political science and, as such, has no prerequisites in terms of content. However, given the frequent reference to relevant historical events and current affairs, students will need to be interested in contemporary politics and keep constantly informed by reading quality newspapers or magazines.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.